

# BLUNSDON

## VILLAGE MAGAZINE



February 2024



Photo by Debra Richardson



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Hello 2024... we hope everyone's having a great start to the year. The temptation is strong to wish everyone a happy new year, but it's probably a little late now we're in February. Looking back at this time last year when we were waiting for the building to be legally transferred to the Parish Council, so they could handover to the community shop, it's amazing to see how far we've come. Something that can be easily overlooked when we're wrapped up in the day to day, but at the start of the year it's always a good time to reflect on what's been and plan for what's to come. On that note, we have lots to tell you about...

There's a social walking group every first and third Thursday of the month at 10am, starting and finishing at the café. If you're interested in joining, you can either rock up or contact Alex Kasperczak in advance on 07554811779 or alex.kasperczak@outlook.com. If walking isn't your thing, we're also running Knit and Natter every Thursday from 2-4pm in the café and on the first Wednesday of every month, there's the Create and Connect Art sessions from 10-11.30am in the café.

We have lots of 'Tea and talks' planned this year, that are held on Tuesdays from 2.30pm. This year we've already heard from Jim Tayler, one of our Parish Councillors, and Shirley Ludford, Deputy Lieutenant of Wiltshire, who also presented David Taunt his recently awarded Nuclear Test Medal. Coming up we'll be hearing from Steve Treadwell on Tuesday 6 February, who'll be talking about the history and secrets of Coleshill House and Estate. And on Tuesday 5 March, we'll hear from Andy Binks who's a Swindon local historian and trustee of the war graves at Radnor Cemetery. Keep an eye on our social media for all the latest details.

It's a great time to consider becoming a shareholder if you're not one already. As a shareholder, you'll be invited to our annual AGM and receive regular newsletters containing important updates about the shop/ how it's running/ any changes we're planning to make. We're also going to be organising a number of events throughout the year where shareholders will receive a discount, for example wine tastings, promotional months etc. Shares are £10 each and you can buy as many as you'd like – if you're interested, please pick up a form from the shop.

And finally, some exciting news to kick start the year... we're being presented with our physical Kings Award (crystal trophy) and certificate on Friday 9 February, by the Lord-Lieutenant of Wiltshire, Sarah Troughton. You may have noticed on our aprons that we've already provided all staff and volunteers with their own Kings Award for Volunteering badge, but it will be nice to finally have something we can have on display in the shop to mark this achievement. Mark your calendars – the shop will be shut between 12 noon and 2pm on the day for the presentation, which is an invitation only event, but we will share some photos on social media afterwards.

**Normal Opening Hours Monday – Saturday: 8am – 5pm Sunday: 8am – 4pm**  
**Café shuts an hour before close**



### BLUNSDON WI

Unfortunately, the January WI was cancelled due to the village hall boiler breaking in the midst of a very cold spell. The book club did go ahead at Daphne's where A man called Ove by Frederik Backman was discussed. It was mostly very well received with several people giving it a score of 10/10. It was also a lovely way to spend a cold Monday afternoon with a cup of tea and cake. Several leisure activities have been organised over the coming months including a trip to see the snowdrops at Welford Park on 23<sup>rd</sup> February. Others will be announced at WI at the February meeting. Our next meeting is on the 20th February at 7.30 in the small hall when the talk will be about Henry VIII's wives Catherine Howard and Catherine Parr.

For more information, please contact Anna on te:706392 or check out our website: [www.blunsdonwi.co.uk](http://www.blunsdonwi.co.uk)



### **Upper Thames and Ridgeway National Trust Association**

*Here comes another year with the constant message that we hope that it is better than the last one. The local National Trust group has at last obtained a web site-utrnta.co.uk-and it could make my job redundant, but in the meantime may I offer a sample of events plotted to date.*

*The annual holiday will start on June 15th and will take us to Pembrokeshire and a rather nice looking hotel; a programme of speakers at venues in Highworth, Lechlade and Cirencester and starting on January 18<sup>th</sup> in Lechlade Village Hall with a talk about the National Trust from someone close to his subject. On February 7<sup>th</sup> we meet at Blunsdon House Hotel, Blunsdon for our annual lunch and on February 13<sup>th</sup> we will be at Highworth Village Hall for another speaker. We will be pleased to see you.*

*If you wish for further information, please contact Penny Hockley on 07758 398397*



**CREATE and CONNECT**  
FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH  
10:00-11:30 AM  
**Blunsdon Community Shop and Cafe**  
Unit 1 Blunt Rise  
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From drawing and painting to knitting and crafting, this is a chance for adults of any ability to create in a social setting. Bring along your projects.



### **Parish Council News – February 2024**

'...and February made me shiver...' it certainly has brought the frost. From the warmest and the wettest December/January to very cold mornings.

What should have been a new start for the improvement of the Borough's recycling performance has been fraught with many difficulties that we have all experienced. Although we have no control over how it is managed, the Parish Council has continued to give feedback to our Borough Ward Councillors who are directly involved in helping to resolve the problems as they arise. Please continue to report 'non-collections' on the SBC website, it will take them some time to recover but they will.

We have some apologies to make regarding the Village Hall. The situation with the boiler is that a major part of it has failed. It is just out of manufacturer guarantee and the Company who fitted it just over two years ago has ceased trading. We have no recourse with Ideal, the manufacturer, so its repair will cost us in the region of £5000.

BT have also taken some time to resolve the Wi-Fi issue in the Hall, but I am assured that it is now working.

We have had to take action to put in surveillance on the litter bin and dog bin at the top of High Street at Ermin Street. Someone is dumping rubbish in multiple bags at this location and it is now under investigation by Swindon Borough Council's investigation team. It costs you the tax payers £11 per bag to remove it safely. If you see anyone doing this, please let us know. Thank you.

### **Good News!**

- ✓ We have installed a new light to illuminate the very dark car park at the Village Hall where the old shop was.
- ✓ We have laid a new path in the Cemetery where it was much worn, up to the War Memorial.
- ✓ A massive thank you to a Blunsdon resident, Mr Whiteside, who has done a magnificent job cleaning the children's play area in Linley Road.
- ✓ We have fitted a new defibrillator at the new Village Shop. (we now have 3 in the Parish – Blunsdon House Hotel, the Village Hall and now the Shop)
- ✓ Our persistence with Swindon Highways has paid off and they have finally repaired the surface of Ermin Street around the chicane.

We have planned some more work along Ermin Street to try to improve road safety along its length from the bottom of Blunsdon Hill to the chicane.

Oliver Saunders who is working on the project, will be approaching residents along the road to find out their views on how we might change the landscaping to help slow down the traffic. Please help him out with your thoughts, thank you.

### **Linley Road Tennis Courts and Grassed Area**

We have finally instructed our contractor to begin the first phase of the works to improve this area. It will involve creating a much-needed 12 space parking area outside the school gates, which will help ease the morning and evening congestion and provide extra parking for those using the Recreation Ground. They will also be creating a foundation for the office to manage the use of the Multi Use Games Area. The MUGA will follow in the second phase.

### **Hedges and Pavements**

Now is a very good time to cut back your vegetation where it may overhang a public footpath or pavement. We have many residents who complain to us about the difficulty they are experiencing staying safe while walking along our pavements because the vegetation 'pushes' them into the road. Please take a look at yours and think about this safety aspect and please cut it back. Some of you have done it and I thank those that have.

### **Planning Applications**

**Ref. No: S/20/0769** A revised application for the erection of 125 dwellings on land north of Turnpike Road, part of the Kingsdown allocation, was presented and the Parish Council provided a lengthy objection to this application.

**Ref. No: S/23/1354** Erection of single storey side & front extensions to existing sports Pavilion, siting of 2no steel storage containers, external access path and outdoor gym area. Sports Pavilion Blunsdon Recreation Ground Sutton Park Blunsdon. Status: Pending Decision

**Ref. No: S/LDP/23** Certificate of Lawfulness (Proposed) for the erection of a single storey rear extension and rear dormer window. 30 Ceres Road Swindon SN26 8AF. Application Pending Decision

**S/OUT/23/1499** | Outline application for the erection of agricultural livestock buildings and workers accommodation - Access and Scale not reserved. | Land At Little Rose Farm Blunsdon Swindon. Application Pending Decision

### **Planning Decisions**

**Ref. No. S/17/1821** The outline application for over 1500 dwellings at Kingsdown was passed by the Borough Council planning Committee, despite many objections from the Parish Council regarding, among many other things, traffic congestion and air pollution.

**Ref. No: S/HOU/23/1383** Erection of timber outbuilding for use as home office/store (retrospective).

116 High Street Blunsdon Swindon SN26 7AB Status: Application Granted

**Ref. No: S/23/1124** Erection of 1no. dwelling and detached double garage. Land Adjacent To Eden Field Kingsdown Lane Blunsdon Swindon. Status: Application Withdrawn

### **Swindon Borough Councillor's Surgeries**

Don't forget you can go and talk to your Ward Borough Councillors, Nick Gardiner, Vijay Manro and Steve Weisinger, on the first Saturday of each month at the Village Shop and Café. They are there to listen.

Parish Council Meetings – The next two Parish Council meetings will be on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> and Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024, at 19:30 in the Village Hall. If you want to come along, please let us know, details are on the Parish Council, notice boards, Website in the Blog section and on our Facebook page.

Ian Jankinson – [ianjankinson@blunsdonparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:ianjankinson@blunsdonparishcouncil.co.uk) – 07702 684281



St Leonard's Church  
Blunsdon  
Connecting with God, each other  
and our community

## News from the Pews

### **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January Holy Communion**

Rev Liz Griffiths came to take the service and preach. Liz kindly comes once a month to Blunsdon to help. Her day job is working for a small charity called Bridge Builders who work in the field of reconciliation and mediation often within a Christian context. She has been coming to Blunsdon regularly for several years now and has become a very valued member of our clergy team led by the Rev Phil Goodey.

Sheila prepares our communion, ably assisted by Judith.

Our prayers today were written and read by Erica.

Our music group has four members, Paul Medlock – a very proficient guitarist, Amanda – an excellent flautist and Hilary Gibbin or Sandra on piano/organ. Hilary played today.

Penny, Josie, or Janet Forrester will eloquently read Bible passages during the service. Penny read today.

Barbara or maybe Hilary Fenton will prepare coffee and refreshments and of course wash up afterwards!

Paul Morris is our lay reader, often takes services and who, in addition, prepares our weekly bulletin and operates our sound desk.

Kathryn, our other lay reader, organises collections for The Filling Station on a regular basis. We nearly always have flowers in church, and these are often arranged by Janet Scott, Margaret, Sue, or Pam.

Our cleaning team are Erica, Karen, Judith, Pauline, and Maggie Fisher. See them working hard one Friday a month.

Don't forget the bellringers who ring the first and third and third Sundays of the month.

Thank you, Jane and Phil and others too numerous to mention.

Don't forget Georgie and Sam who help at Breakfast Church, Karen and Helen who run the Toddler and Baby group, Rachel and family who run Lego club, Jane and Barbara who run the book sales.

What a team! If I have forgotten anyone, many apologies.

Come along and join us, our aim in all we do is to support each other within our congregation, as well as the wider village and live out our faith in the context of Blunsdon and its environs.

If you would like to be part of our friendly and supportive community or receive our weekly bulletin, get in touch with the churchwarden, Helen on [griff9999@btinternet.com](mailto:griff9999@btinternet.com) or just turn up. You will find services in this magazine.

**Come and meet us!**

**Come In For Lunch:  
Homemade Soup & Bread  
Tuesdays in Lent noon-2pm**

**February 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>**

**March 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>**

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and/or bread, please contact

Jane:

[jane\\_ockwell@hotmail\\_com](mailto:jane_ockwell@hotmail_com)





## FROM THE VICAR'S DESK



St Leonard's Church  
Blunsdon

Connecting with God, each other  
and our community

### **Into the Wilderness**

Paul Morris, Licenced Lay Minister

As we come into February Lent is upon us, with Lent Lunches starting in St Leonard's on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February and running for 5 weeks. Lent will take us from Ash Wednesday on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February through to Holy Week and Easter. For the church a season that grows in intensity as we join in the events that lead to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

During Lent we mute our celebration. The seasonal colour is purple, the colour of preparation, repentance, and mourning. There are no flowers in church. No Gloria or Alleluias. We take time to reflect on our relationships with God, with each other, and with our world. We take stock of our faith and take a long hard look at our Christian believing and practising. We might give up something for Lent, going without favourite treats, or take something on that builds our faith through spiritual discipline.

In this season Jesus spends 40 days in the wilderness. Immediately following his baptism by John, the Holy Spirit drives him into a hostile, difficult environment where he is tested and tempted, being prepared for what's to come as he enters into his calling. Most people have some sort of wilderness experience in their lives. Being a Christian, being faithful to Jesus, does not protect us from difficult times and places. What is wilderness for you? Is it a place of grief, loneliness or isolation? Is it a place of addiction coupled with denial, guilt or self-loathing? Is it a place of competition, the need to be the biggest or the best, the longing for status? Is it a place of ageing? Is it a place of unemployment or the threat of redundancy? Is it financial loss? Is it the wilderness of leadership with difficult or impossible decisions to make? The wilderness is a place where one is at risk, endangered, frightened, vulnerable, lonely.

The good news is that the wilderness contains angels. We need to have our eyes open to these, as God's messengers, from time to time. A loving word or action, the care from a friend, the call from someone can make a difference to someone in the wilderness, enabling them to catch hold of hope and be strengthened. And we need to be those angels.

Wilderness isn't restricted to Lent; we can find ourselves in it at any time and sometimes with little notice. Lent reminds us of the wilderness and encourages us to put down deep roots in Christ to prepare us for desert times. As with Jesus, we can use the wilderness place to strengthen our faith and trust in the one who loves us, provides for us and promises never to let us go.

Most of all, let us remember this Lent that Jesus is in the wilderness. He goes before us, is alongside us, behind us, and through his suffering and death has triumphed and saved us. Whatever happens, whatever wildernesses we endure, God, in Jesus, will be there.

## Would you like to be an Explorer?

An Explorer Scout Unit (boys and girls aged 14 to 17) is being set up in Blunsdon St Andrew.



Explorers is a fantastic way of learning skills for life, making new friends and being involved in a wide range of activities. Skills that young people can learn include teamwork, problem solving, leadership, self-confidence and social skills. These skills can be useful when applying for university or an apprenticeship or on a CV when looking for a job.

Explorers will also be able to plan their own programme. With over 200 activities ranging from abseiling to caving, drama to paddle boarding and cooking to zorbing, Explorers has something for everyone.

Emily, an Explorer Scout said, "It's great to be involved in a safe environment doing activities with friends." Oscar, after getting to the top of a climbing wall said, "I was taken out of my comfort zone. My friends encouraged me to carry on climbing. Getting to the top gave me a great deal of pride and confidence."

Volunteer, Anne said, "The reasons we are opening an Explorer Unit is due to the increased retention at Scouts age (boys and girls aged 10 to 14). It's also due to young people who have not been involved in Scouts seeing what we do and the skills we learn and are asking to join." The Unit opened on Tuesday 9 January at Redhouse Community Centre, SN25 2NJ with the session starting at 8.00pm. It will run for an inaugural five weeks. For further information, please contact Colin Hall on [colinhallmk@hotmail.com](mailto:colinhallmk@hotmail.com)

If you are aged over 18 and would like to volunteer with the Unit, please also get in touch.

For further information about Scouts, please visit [www.scouts.org.uk/join](http://www.scouts.org.uk/join)

## **Highworth & District Probus Club.**

A little late, but a Happy and Exciting New year to everyone. We all enjoyed a magnificent Christmas Lunch at Wrag Barn in their superb dining room, overlooking the golf course. Now we are enjoying a new, 2024 Club Programme of interesting talks-January and February have slid past quickly with four fine talks and we have two excellent talks in March. On the 5<sup>th</sup> we have "The Artistry of Mosaics" and on the 19<sup>th</sup> an unusual topic "St. Helena Airport Construction"

Local retired gentlemen are welcome to join us at a meeting with no obligation, but hopefully with a view to joining our club to enjoy the comradeship and entertainment. Members often follow the meeting with a drink in the Cold Harbour bar and there is an occasional after meeting optional lunch.

More details are available on our website [www.highworthprobus.co.uk](http://www.highworthprobus.co.uk)

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# Are you interested in being a volunteer for Citizens Advice Swindon?

Our organisation runs on volunteer power so we would love to hear from you!

If you feel inspired to volunteer your time, we are seeking help in the following roles:

**Advisers**

**Assessors**

**Receptionists**

Full training provided for all roles. A fantastic opportunity to meet like minded people, improve your skills, strengthen your confidence, all while helping your local community!

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call 01793 402106

Or visit our website

<https://www.citizensadviceswindon.org.uk/volunteer>



### Notes from the Editor

The magazine is run by volunteers from the village. All your ideas, comments and contributions will always be welcome.

Blunsdon Village Magazine is available to read online at Blunsdon Parish Council website: [blunsdonparishcouncil.co.uk](http://blunsdonparishcouncil.co.uk)

EDITOR: Please email all items for the magazine to [blunsdonmagazine@gmail.com](mailto:blunsdonmagazine@gmail.com)  
Arlene tel. 01793 727306

ADVERTS: For advert enquiries please contact Penny on 01793 722073

Front Cover: Front door at new home Via Alveus, Broadbush

### Your March Magazine will be delivered from: 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb

Magazine issue	Deadline for items for inclusion
<b>March</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>20<sup>th</sup> March</b>

**Thank you** to everyone who attended Christmas Crafties on Wednesday December 6th. We had a fabulous time, and some very beautiful crafts were created. Delicious home-made mince pies and mulled wine were enjoyed and best of all the event raised £718.12 for this year's nominated charity, Swindon Young Carers. Next years event is on December 4<sup>th</sup> 2024!



A huge **thank you** to everyone who got involved with the Scout Christmas post and helped us raise over £750 for 1<sup>st</sup> Blunsdon Scout Group. The wonderful team at our community shop sold nearly 2,000 stamps and our Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Explorers and parents delivered over 2,200 Christmas

cards! An amazing effort – thanks to all. Steve Iles, Group Scout Leader 07885 188079  
[iles.swindon@gmail.com](mailto:iles.swindon@gmail.com)

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#### OPENING HOURS

Day	Doctor Times	Reception
Mon	3.10pm - 4.40pm	3pm-6.15pm
Tues	8.30am - 10.40am	8.45am - 12.15pm
Weds	4pm - 7.10pm	3pm - 7.15pm
Thurs	8.30am - 10.40am	8.45am - 12.15pm
Frid	8.30am - 10.40am	8.45am - 12.15pm



## *A Recipe from CookFoodFan*

I love a recipe which becomes a regular, looks and smells tempting, but is also tasty and healthy. Also, it's a bonus if it is cooked in one pan and, even better if all the family likes it. As regular readers will know I collect recipes, torn from papers, magazines, found in library books or best recommended by a friend. This is a 'go to' recipes from my collection.

### **One-Pan Pesto Chicken and Veggies (Serves 4)**

2 tbsp olive oil

500g chicken thighs, boneless and skinless, sliced into strips

35-40g sundried tomatoes, drained of oil and chopped

450g asparagus, ends trimmed and cut in half if large

**OR** 450g French beans, ends trimmed and cut in half if large

65g basil pesto (I use green pesto from a jar)

150g cherry tomatoes, halved

- Heat a large frying or saute pan on a medium heat, add 2 tbsp olive oil. Season the chicken with salt and add to the pan with half the chopped sun-dried tomatoes.
- Cook everything on a medium heat for 5-10 minutes, turning a couple of times, until the chicken is cooked through. Remove the chicken and tomatoes from the pan, leaving any oil.
- Add the asparagus or beans, remaining half of the sun-dried tomatoes and cook on medium heat for 5-10mins until the asparagus or beans are cooked through.
- Add the chicken and tomatoes back into the pan with the pesto, stir to coat and reheat for 2-3 mins. Add the halved cherry tomatoes, mix well for a couple of minutes so it is all coated.
- Serve.

Tip: If you buy a jar of pesto, don't let it sit in your fridge to go off. I put mine (left in the jar) into the freezer and use it at a later date. Or you could portion it in an ice cube tray, then put the cubes in a freezer bag. Enjoy!

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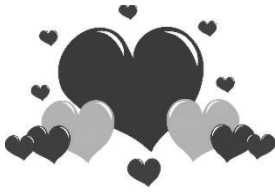
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## The Chatterbox      What's Love Got to Do with It?



Readers of a certain age might remember the toe-curlingly awkward interview between the newly engaged Lady Diana Spencer and HRH Prince Charles back in 1981. Asked whether they were in love, Diana responded, demurely, “Of course,” whilst Charles gave the decidedly unromantic, vague comment, “Whatever in love means.” Looking back now, I think it’s plain to see the chasm of difference between them and their emotions.

In this month when card shops turn pink and flower shops turn red, it’s a good time to ask what this word, “love”, even means? Well, according to one definition I found, it is “an intense feeling of deep affection”. On that, I agree. The ways in which it is demonstrated, however, reveal its meaning far clearer than words alone can. Love is present in so many relationships – a parent’s love for a child, a man’s love for a woman, the love between dear friends, and so on. From ensuring your child has warm clothes to wear, surprising a partner with a concert ticket for a favourite singer, to making a meal for an unwell parent, these actions speak louder than those three words ever can.

When it comes to romantic love, there’s a strong possibility that it was Geoffrey Chaucer, better known for ‘The Canterbury Tales’, who first connected this emotion to St Valentine’s Day when he wrote his ‘Parliament of Fowls’ around 1381. This poem, in which Chaucer claims “Seynt Valentynes day” is the day “whan every foul cometh ther to chese his make”, consisted of some 700 lines and possibly relates to the courtship and marriage of Richard II and Princess Anne of Bohemia in 1382. Allegedly, there are at least two St Valentine’s who met their fate on February 14<sup>th</sup> in different years but, until the time of writing of “Parliament of Fowls”, St Valentine’s Day had no connection to romance. After doing a bit of research, it seems the popular belief is that St Valentine was a Roman priest who was martyred during the persecution of Christians by Emperor Claudius II in about AD 270. Amongst various other things, he is listed as the patron saint of epileptics and beekeepers.

The earliest known Valentine’s greeting is one from 1477 in the form of a letter from Margery to her beloved, John, and from 1500 they were commonly exchanged in Europe as the practice steadily grew and spread. The letters were later replaced by cards which were often religious in their form but over time, the sacred heart became a love heart and the accompanying angel appeared as Cupid. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, printed cards were more common and improved printing methods allowed mass production. Today, love is a massive industry!

Whether you buy your loved one a Valentine’s Day card or not, I wish you not just a day, but a lifetime that’s filled with love shared with your most precious people.

Oh, and chocolate! Chocolate is always nice to receive on Valentine’s Day. I live in hope!



**Blunsdon Village Garden Club  
A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL!**



Our speaker this month was Nicola Hope who entertained us with a brief summary of her career to date, commencing with a volunteer spot at Highgrove arranged by her father (which involved a lot of topiary!), before going on to work for celebrities (and eccentrics!) around the Cotswolds and obtain qualifications when her children were old enough. Not the normal way round but it seems to have worked for her! She was happy to answer members' questions.

February's guest speaker is Joff Elphick, a writer, podcaster and freelance gardener who has previously worked at Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons and Barnsley House and also with the National Trust. His chosen talk is not one that we are likely to experience in this area (see club's 2024 programme) but who knows? It promises to be entertaining so why don't you come along to the village hall on 8<sup>th</sup> February, 7.30 pm and see for yourself. Entry cost is £3 per ticket. All are welcome. Brenda Boyd 01793 725928

**Blunsdon Village Garden Club Programme 2024**

Date	Speaker	Subject
11 <sup>th</sup> January	Nicola Hope	Tales from the Potting Shed
8 <sup>th</sup> February	Joff Elphick	Crayfish in the Lawn
14 <sup>th</sup> March	Rebecca Brain	Wildflowers in the Garden
11 <sup>th</sup> April	Oliver O'Dell	Aquaponics
9 <sup>th</sup> May	Evening visit to Aquaponics	Longcot, Faringdon
18 <sup>th</sup> May	ANNUAL CLUB PLANT SALE	Blunsdon Village Hall
13 <sup>th</sup> June	Afternoon visit to the Butterfly Garden	
11 <sup>th</sup> July	****CLUB OUTING****	
-----	**No Meeting in August**	
12 <sup>th</sup> September	Ross Sheppard (Stanton Park Ranger)	Management of the Parks
10 <sup>th</sup> October	AGM, followed by Mandy Bradshaw	Four Seasons Cotswold Style (Cards for Sale)
14 <sup>th</sup> November	Julie Ritchie	Winter into Spring (Plants for Sale)
12 <sup>th</sup> December	****CHRISTMAS****	

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**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March, Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March.**

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**February Services at St Leonard's**

Sunday 4th February	10.00am	Holy Communion
Sunday 11th February	10.00am	Morning Worship
Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> February	10.00am	Holy Communion
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> February	9.00am	Breakfast Church



## **BLUNSDON FOOTBALL CLUB**

**First XI – tenth (out of 17) Wiltshire Premier Division**

### **Recent Results**

Trowbridge Town – won 4 – 1

Kintbury Rangers – lost 0 – 4

A superb win over the once mighty Trowbridge Town to end 2023. However, 2024 began with a chastening defeat to table toppers Kintbury Rangers. At least February brings a full fixture list, and even if it 6 inches deep in snow, Wiltshire League chiefs insist that games must go ahead with the use of an orange ball and red line marking.

**Reserves – 4th (out of 11) Swindon & District League One**

### **Recent Results**

Spectrum – won 7 - 1

Moredon – lost 2 - 3

Drunken Masters - lost 0 - 3

The Ressies need to dig deep to get back on the title trail. They have the chance on 17<sup>th</sup> February to revenge a pre-Christmas defeat in the Penhill fog to Moredon, where Blunny blew a two goal lead. Player Manager, Franklin Murray, will need to galvanise the blend of youth and experience at his disposal.

### **February fixtures**

<b>Date</b>	<b>First XI - 2.15 pm</b>	<b>Reserves – 2.30 pm</b>
3rd	<b>Larkhall Athletic (home)</b>	
10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Calne Town (home)</b>	
17th	Salisbury (away)	<b>Moredon (home)</b>
24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Amesbury Town (home)</b>	Purton (away)
2 <sup>nd</sup> March, 3pm	Odd Down (away)	<b>Stratton Juniors (home)</b>

**Come and support the Amber & Black at The Theatre of Trees, Sutton Park and beyond.**



## Reading with Wine

I hope you enjoyed a wonderful festive period and the start to the new year has treated you well so far. How are the New Year's Resolutions going? I have a couple of Reading with Wine ones for you to try if you are (somewhat belatedly) still looking for inspiration. Last year, my son and I completed the Alphabet challenge; we did it by title, but you can also choose to look at an alphabet of authors. We thoroughly enjoyed it and found ourselves reading books that we wouldn't necessarily have done without the push of the challenge. My top tip is start with the hard letters, X and Z, for example and not leave them until the end of the year! Another popular one for this year is 24 in 24; it's as easy as that. You choose 24 books and must read them by the end of 2024. If you pick two from my suggestions every month, you'll get there! Which leads me to my challenge this year, I'm reading and drinking 'a year of prompts' and have decided to set the challenge to Blunsdon too so let me know what you chose for each prompt. This month, I'm keeping it simple, and the prompt is 'New Beginnings' You can choose any type of book or wine at all as long as it represents a new start in some way.

Book wise- I'm recommending '**The Start of Something New**' by Miranda Dickinson. This is a heartwarming, cosy read that will make you believe in the goodness of people. It is the ideal way to go into a new year with hope, a hint of comedy and a delightful little boy that will melt your heart. Bethan is a single parent taking life one day at a time. She loves her little boy, Noah and her job at the local garden centre but worries a lot about their future. Lachlan is looking at a completely different life after a car accident leaves him unable to walk and therefore stay in his job in the army. Never having known anything different, he doesn't know what his future holds other than his pets, Bert and Ernie! Both need a life outside of their flats but maybe they should be looking a little bit closer to home. In a world of technology and dating apps this book takes us back to proper signs, messages and love notes and I for one, absolutely loved it!

Other options could be *The House of New Beginnings* by Lucy Diamond, *New Beginnings* by Fern Britton, *How to be an Ex- Footballer* by Peter Crouch, *The Midnight Library* from Matt Haig...Personally I've chosen *Sister Stardust* from Jane Green. I'm a long-time fan of hers so looking forward to starting this one.

In terms of a wine- maybe you did Dry January and if so, Well Done! Maybe you didn't and you can turn it into Try January instead? Here is a couple of 'new beginning' wines for you to look out for. New wines tend to be more affordable but perhaps more of a risk in terms of knowing what to look for; I'm here to help! If you spent 2023 drinking Sauvignon Blanc; this year, try a Picpoul. Asda do a great Picpoul de Pinet Blanc Sec for just £8.75. It's crisp and fresh with a demure lasting taste- a good start to the year that I think will be a favourite year long. If you like a red but nervous of anything other than a Cabernet Sauvignon...try a Touriga Nacional. In particular, the Loved and Found selection from Waitrose Cellar. From the grapes in the Algarve that make port, this combines floral notes with cocoa and spice and is a fail-safe bet for a new wine to try. And finally, if you want to toast but looking for something other than a Champagne; try a Crémant. One of my favourites is the Specially Selected from Aldi for just £8.99. It's a perfect dupe for a well known double barrelled Champagne brand and a great place to start your 2024 wine adventure challenge.

Whether you decide to try the book or wine challenge- or maybe go for both! I'm on Instagram as @reading\_with\_wine so tag me in your books and wine photos! (or [readingwithwine@yahoo.com](mailto:readingwithwine@yahoo.com))

## PCC Philip Wilkinson's February Parish Column



Delivering a police service which meets the needs of its communities has never been more important – or challenging. I know residents want greater public engagement with officers, more public access to officers and an increased officer presence at community level.

Wiltshire Police is addressing this with the introduction of a new operating model with neighbourhood teams providing visible, neighbourhood-focused, policing and delivering a recent improvement programme to provide a better-quality service 999 and 101 callers.

My commitment has been to invest in mobile police stations so our rural communities receive the same level of service, improve Melksham Custody so it is fit-for-purpose and the future, invest in training facilities to provide an exemplary environment to equip our police officers to keep you safe and to challenge the force to consistently provide a quality service to residents – regardless of location.

All of this is underpinned by the importance of investment in police 'estate' to support the delivery of a policing service I know our residents want - and deserve.

My newly-launched Estates Strategy sets out this vision. I believe Wiltshire Police will be better equipped to provide the policing service our communities want if they have the infrastructure which supports them to respond more effectively and efficiently.

The strategy ensures we have well-placed police stations and hubs providing a base for our staff to work smarter, adapt to changing crime and, more importantly, ensuring that not only will communities be safer but they will start to feel safer too. You can read the full strategy on my website.

---

### Polite reminder to all Blunsdon dog owners .....



# Prospect Hospice

together making every day count

Step into 2024 on a healthy note by joining Prospect Hospice's Spring Run at Stanton Country Park on Sunday 3 March. Whether you're a seasoned athlete or a novice runner, this event has something for everyone, featuring time-chipped 5k and 10k routes. Beyond a celebration of fitness, the run aims to raise funds for Prospect Hospice's crucial end-of-life care services for local people.

The Spring Run is an inclusive event, welcoming participants of all levels. Regardless of whether you're aiming for a personal best or embracing a healthier lifestyle, this event invites you to be a part of a memorable day filled with community spirit.

"We're delighted to bring our Spring Run back to Stanton Park for another year of exciting challenges and community spirit," said Sheryl Crouch, head of income at Prospect Hospice. "This event is not just about running; it's about coming together, pushing boundaries, and making a positive impact on the lives of those in need. Whether you've experienced the hospice's care or just simply want to run and raise funds for a great cause, we welcome you to join us for a day of fun, fitness, and fundraising."

To learn more and register, visit [www.prospect-hospice.net/springrun](http://www.prospect-hospice.net/springrun)



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